



# Workplace Fire Safety

## A Factsheet on Fire Safety in the Workplace

Fire in structures where people work accounted for business losses totalling more than \$4 billion annually in 2002. Prevention can greatly reduce injury and minimize loss if employees and employers work together to promote fire safety in the work environment.

### Prevention

**Extension cords** can be dangerous. Never run them under carpets, or anywhere they can be pinched under or behind furniture. Avoid overloading electrical sockets and plugging extension cords together.

Keep all **electrical appliances** away from anything that can catch fire. Remember to always turn them off at the end of each day.

Pay attention to **housekeeping issues**. Try not to clutter exits, stairways, and storage areas with waste paper, empty boxes, and other fire hazards.

Designate **smoking areas** away from combustible pathways or beauty bark. Where smoking is permitted, provide non-combustible receptacles for cigarette ends as distinct from containers for waste.

**Arson** is the largest single cause of fires in general office buildings. Keep a watch out for fire hazards and report any concerns to authorities.

### Fire Drills Pay Off

It is important that everyone fully understands what to do in the event of a fire in the building. Whether

you work in a 50-story high rise or a four-story medical clinic **fire drills** should follow the established fire emergency procedures.

Fire drills can make the difference in helping employees know what to do when a fire occurs. People then to perform those behaviors that they have practiced in emergencies.

In spite of installed fire alarm systems and protection features, if employees do not act or know what to do when the alarm sounds, they may still be in danger. Fire drills are the best indicator that during a fire emergency, evacuation will go smoothly and successfully.

### If Fire Strikes

**Sound the alarm** to notify your co-workers, no matter how small the fire, and then leave the area quickly.

Make certain your co-workers are **evacuating the area**. Also make certain that **911** has been called to get help on the way.

If there is a lot of **smoke**, crawl low underneath it and test doors for heat before you open them. If one of your escape routes can't be used quickly, go to your second exit.

Once outside, go to the assigned **meeting place** for your building. Follow the instructions of fire and security personnel. Stay out of the way, and do not go back into the building until they say it is safe.

### Employees should

- learn the locations of at least two exits from all work areas,
- know where the nearest fire alarm is and how to use it,
- always participate in fire drills
- post the fire department number on or near all phones and
- know the exact address of their workplace.

### Employers should

- schedule and conduct fire drills for all shifts and employees,
- post building evacuation plans,
- discuss evacuation plans with new employees, and
- include disabled employees in the planning process.

### For More Information

#### Contact:

Seattle Fire Department  
Public Education Office  
206-386-1337

[www.cityofseattle.gov/fire](http://www.cityofseattle.gov/fire)